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SOCIAL CONTROL. V.

RELIGION.

THE influencing of the *will* by rewards and punishments—legal, social, and supernatural—and by social suggestion has been described. We now pass on to that ascendancy which society gains by working on the *feelings* of its members.

In this form of social control the feelings of men toward objects or experiences are changed in direction or force. In order to lessen anti-social conduct the desire for the ends thereby gained is changed into indifference or aversion, or else interest in rival aims is stimulated. For example, a desolating greed leading to fraud and venality may be controlled by holding riches up to contempt or by fostering interest in sports, scholarship, culture, or public affairs. In order to procure social conduct, indifference or repugnance to the implied ends is changed into liking, or the zest for competing aims is killed. For instance, patriotic sacrifices may be obtained by dwelling on the thrill of battle and the joy of victory, or by deprecating the rewards of peace, such as domestic happiness, comfort, wealth, or fame.

Among the means for the orientation of the feelings of the individual to the advantage of society, we shall first of all consider religion.

The reader is warned that the word is here used in a very restricted sense. Undoubtedly the main trunk of what is called "religion" is an evolution of beliefs taking their rise from ultimate questions respecting the nature and meaning of the world and of man, and calling up feelings of fear, wonder, reverence, dependence, gratitude, or love. These beliefs are by no means devoid of social value,¹ but their ethical yield is not such as to

¹ Of the mystic Tarde says: "Le sentiment illusoire ou non de cette co-possession du moi par son non-moi intime, qu'il appelle son Dieu, et réciproquement, est la

make them important instruments of social control. But from the main stem branch off lines of belief that may be called ethical because of their aid in stimulating men to social conduct. One of these offshoots has already been considered in the paper entitled "Belief." I shall now examine another branch for which it has seemed best to reserve the word "religion." Be it understood from the outset that any historical religion, such as Buddhism or Judaism, contains several elements of ethical value other than the two just mentioned.

For the purposes of this paper, therefore, I take the social standpoint and define religion as the *conviction of an ideal bond between the members of a society and the feelings that arise in consequence of that conviction.*

The beginnings of this social religion carry us far back in the history of societies. Even in the most primitive groups, besides the restraints on one's self due to a prudent regard for consequences, there are other restraints imposed by fellow feeling. A natural basis for this feeling is afforded by long association from earliest childhood. Even carnivora of the same litter are gentle to each other, and the heart of primitive man is softened by companionship. From the intercourse of housemates spring toleration, delight in each other's presence, comprehension, consciousness of likeness, sympathy. But as such association is usually realized only in the case of brothers and sisters, blood kinship soon becomes identified with kindness in the reflections of early men. In consequence the feeling that springs up spontaneously among associates is transferred to all recognized kin.

This is conventionalized and becomes the basis of the first stable groups. By the blood covenant and the fiction of adoption this primitive tie is made elastic enough for practical purposes. "The commingling of blood by which two men become brothers or two kins allies, and the fiction of adoption by which

source d'un étrange amour qui rejaillit souvent sur l'universalité des créatures." Often in the ecstasy or *yoga* "il est poussé par ses voix et ses joies intérieures à un dévouement fécond envers ses frères, à une conception plus large de la famille humaine."—*La Logique Sociale*, pp. 283, 284.

a tribesman was feigned to be the veritable son of a member of a tribe, are both evidences of the highest value that the Arabs were incapable of conceiving any absolute social obligation or social unity which was not based on kinship."¹

When kinship was the sole firm bond between men it would not do to admit gradations. "Nothing can be clearer than that the original doctrine of kinship recognized no difference of degree."² Blood relationship was so conceived as to appear everywhere equally absolute, and thus to unite all the members of the group in equal bonds. It is only after social feeling acquires other props that there is suffered to prevail a rationalistic view of kinship recognizing degrees of remoteness and of obligation. "All people who think of counting degrees, instead of considering the whole *hayy* as a single unity of blood, are the men who break up the old society and bring in that growing chaos which made the prophet's (Mohammed's) new law a welcome reformation."³

The virtue of kinship lay not in recognition of common descent, but in a realizing sense of identity. "A kin was a group of persons whose lives were so bound up together, in what must be called a physical unity, that they could be treated as parts of one common life. The members of one kindred looked upon themselves as one living whole, a single animated mass of blood, flesh, and bones, of which no member could be touched without all the members suffering."⁴ Both fellowship and morality run along these lines. "Under such a system there can be no inviolable fellowship except between men of the same blood"⁵ . . . "no binding precepts of conduct except those that rest on the principle of kinship."⁶ "No life and no obligation was sacred unless it was brought within the charmed circle of the kindred blood."⁶

A close connection between morality and the conviction of identity of life is witnessed by the blood covenant, where the

¹ ROBERTSON SMITH, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 51.

² *Kinship and Marriage*, p. 53.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁴ ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 255.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

parties make a life-and-death compact by tasting the blood, either of each other or of some animal, by the tie of milk which unites the foster child to the kin of the foster mother,¹ by the ceremony of adoption, by the significance attached to the taking of food together,² by the invention of eponymous heroes to cement alliance of kindreds, and by the prevalence of the sacrificial meal for the purpose of confirming fellowship between a god and his worshipers.³

Could we look into the heart of the primitive men who were put to such symbols and fictions in the quest for a firm basis of association, we should see a strange interplay of belief and feeling, of fear and sympathy. The sentiment natural to those who have suckled at the same breast and lived in the same tent had to be greatly altered before it could hold men together in large groups. There had to grow up a *theory* which should conduct regard for others along certain lines whether it tended that way of itself or not. To the old spontaneity succeeded a set of fellowship feelings more or less artificial. As impulsive sympathy failed often to answer the summons of theory, the blood bond must be so conceived as to inspire awe. It might, moreover, be fortified by superstitious fears and dread of the spirits or gods. So far as these make the tie effective we have the control already considered under the term "belief."

How far the conviction of a common physical life could of itself incline men to fellowship it is hard to say. But for the local associating and coöperating group this conviction must have aided in confirming, extending, and making durable whatever spontaneous affection already existed. Lasting order between men required that the fitfulness of natural feeling be corrected by the stability of those feelings associated with beliefs.

The crude early ideas of relationship seem to have been supported by totemism. Here "the belief that all members of a tribe are of one blood is associated with a conviction, more or less religious in character, that the life of the tribe is in some mysterious way derived from an animal, a plant, or some other

¹ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 257.

² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

natural object.”¹ This hypothesis does justice “to the intimate relation between religion and the fundamental structure of society which is so characteristic of the ancient world.”² In the passage to larger groups “the totem first becomes an animal god, and then comes to be thought of as the divine ancestor more or less completely anthropomorphic.”³

Whatever the primitive tie may have been when the curtain rises on the Aryan race the bond is not now blood but worship. Sympathy and obligation have passed from the plane of physical relationship to the mystic relationship existing between the co-worshippers of the same god. “The tie of blood did not of itself alone constitute the family; the tie of the common worship had to be added.”⁴ “The foundation of relationship was not birth; it was worship.”⁵ “The notion of identity does not hold with the Hindoos, Greeks, and Latins the place it did with the Semites, but the bond is still an ideal one. The dead are the cement that unites men. To have the same gods, to be watched, loved, and protected by the same deities, to be destined to join the same unseen company at death—these created fellowship. In the family natural affection reinforced by this ideal bond becomes piety; in the state the feeling for fellow citizens becomes a narrow and intense patriotism.

From an outward relation to ancestral deities religion was destined to return to the old basis of brotherhood. But now, so much has society enlarged, the assertion of physical kinship is impracticable. It was the mission of the religion of Jesus to proclaim the union of all men in the bonds of an ideal brotherhood.

The social contribution of Jesus is bound up with his doctrine of man. According to him man is both body and soul—the former lying in the chain of heredity and affording a faint race kinship useless for practical purposes; the latter descending directly from God, the common source of all souls. The body is but dust and will perish, but the soul is immortal, indestruc-

¹ *Kinship and Marriage*, p. 186.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁴ DE COULANGES, *The Ancient City*, p. 64.

tible, and destined to union with its source. "Capacity to merge his life with that of similar beings," *i. e.*, social life, is a characteristic of man. He alone is sane, natural, normal, who is in union with his fellows. "In failing to follow the fundamental instincts and capacities of his nature, a man becomes at once selfish, sinful, and unsocial."¹ "He loses those powers by which he might become a member of God's family and of the brotherhood of man."¹ Man realizes his true and complete self only in social life. Selfishness is abnormal and degenerate, and shuts one out from those experiences in which alone there is fullness of life. The "tat-twam asi" (this is thyself) of esoteric Brahmanism—the affirmation of the One below the many and of identity in the midst of change—became in the teaching of Jesus an aspiration, an ideal, a goal of effort and therefore of vast regenerating power.

This doctrine of man requires a religious philosophy that shall afford the requisite substratum for the mystical brotherhood. This is provided in the idea of an All-Father having those social qualities—love, goodness, mercy, truthfulness, faithfulness—which characterize the soul in its perfect state. He is at once source and goal of man's life. Men are brothers because they are his sons. The vine and its branches symbolize the ideal relation that is possible between men and the Father. To identify this All-Father with the creator, sustainer, or first cause, arrived at in the non-social development of belief regarding the universe, is not difficult. More trouble is met in identifying Him with the stern lawgiver, judge and punisher, evolved in the development of "control by belief." The struggle between "justice" and "mercy," between hell fire and love, marks simply the interference of the two great orders of transcendental ideas by which society has sought to control its members.

If our interpretation is correct, human brotherhood and divine fatherhood in order to comprehend this brotherhood constitute

¹ PROFESSOR SHAILER MATHEWS, in AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, September 1895, p. 192.

the religion of Jesus. This humanitarian character Christianity retained for three centuries. Then with the union of the church with the state, the corruption by heathenism, the decay of civil authority and the ascent to temporal power, this element retreated to the background and supernaturalism coming to the front gained and kept control of Christianity for centuries. While there have always been individuals and sects to keep alive in the church the sacred flame of pure human sympathy, the recovery of the primitive traditions and the extensive reorganization of Christian doctrine in line with the social affirmation of Jesus is the achievement of the latter half of this century. The religious thought of Freemantle, Westcott, Farrar, Fairbairn, Hyde, Brooks and Gladden cuts loose from a sickly supernaturalism and lays all stress on the two great wholesome doctrines of the religion of Jesus—the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God.

How far can the conviction of ideal brotherhood inspire sympathy between men? Some there are who doubt if the feelings respond much to beliefs. Yet there are many evidences that they do. Schopenhauer ascribes the Hindoo gentleness toward brutes to the religious doctrine that asserts relationship between men and animals. The degree of sympathy men feel for women, it is everywhere recognized, depends greatly on inherited ideas. The docility with which, in the main, the feeling between the sexes consents to run in the conjugal channels grooved out for it is surprising. The power of caste, national and race differences to dry up the natural springs of human pity is the lament of moralists of all ages.

That, apart from the charm of Jesus himself, his doctrine of brotherhood became from the very first a great socializing force there is no doubt. Says Lecky, "The first aspect in which Christianity presented itself to the world was as a declaration of the fraternity of men in Christ. . . . From this notion grew up the eminently Christian idea of the sanctity of all human life."¹ "Besides quickening greatly our benevolent affections it

¹ LECKY, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, pp. 17 and 18.

definitely and dogmatically asserted the sinfulness of all destruction of human life as a matter of amusement, or of simple convenience, and thereby formed a new standard higher than any which then existed in the world."¹ "This minute and scrupulous care for human life and human virtue in the humblest forms, in the slave, the gladiator, the savage, or the infant, . . . is the distinguishing and transcendent characteristic of every society into which the spirit of Christianity has passed."² "The high conception that has been formed of the sanctity of human life, the protection of infancy, the elevation and final emancipation of the slave classes, the suppression of barbarous games, the creation of a vast and multifarious organization of charity, and the education of the imagination by the Christian type, constitute together a movement of philanthropy which has never been paralleled or approached in the pagan world."³

It would be a mistake to regard the spread of religion as the growing resort to a convenient instrument of social control. Law and the doctrine of future punishment, I have pointed out, are to be explained entirely in the light of their usefulness for regulation. But religion has independent roots. Even if it were not countenanced, furthered, and favored by society in recognition of its services to social peace, it would perpetually renew itself in the hearts of men. For while sympathy is the offspring of the conviction of relationship, it is no less true that the conviction of relationship is the offspring of sympathy. The unexpected energy of fellow feeling at the time suggests to the reflective mind an ideal bond between ourselves and others. In the absence of a theory of the origin of the social sentiments, they cannot but seem to deny our visible separateness and to intimate an unseen relationship between men. A religious philosophy, therefore, tends perpetually to spring up afresh wherever there is a flow of warm human sympathy.

What now is the moral gain from the conviction that men stand to each other in a relation best described by the term, "brotherhood."

¹ LECKY, *History of European Morals*, Vol. II, p. 20. ² *Ibid.*, p. 34. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

It is one thing to recognize the manifold interactions of men in social life and to act accordingly; it is quite another thing to believe that apart from, and prior to, the bonds of interdependence, trust, or affection that grow up in the social mechanism, there is a unity of essence that calls for justice and sympathy between men. The mere perception of likeness fosters sympathy, but the conviction of underlying oneness does more. It destroys the ego-centric world which each unreflecting creature builds for itself under the spur of the self-preservative instinct. It opposes to spontaneous selfishness the growing authority of reason.¹ It makes egoism appear as denial of the ideal bond, therefore itself untrue. It fosters respect for others by putting them in the eyes of reason on the same footing with ourselves.¹ It lessens our willingness to use them as means to our own ends.

The growing disgust with that self-abasement and fawning servility that tickles the vanity of a savage potentate, the growing levelness of speech of superior to inferior, the swelling tide of sentiment that bespatters the criminal while uplifting the slave, the serf, and the woman; the prompt indignation on behalf of the oppressed and put-upon, the increasing sanctity of human life, the reverential treatment everywhere accorded the dead—these, if traced down to their tap root will be found to spring not from belief in God or immortality, but from something still deeper, viz., the conviction of our fundamental identity in nature and destiny. This is the modern counterpart of the old blood bond and may perhaps be as much to our social union as that tie was to the primitive Semites.

We have but to perceive that the real belief-basis of our characteristic forms of ethical feeling is idealistic,² but not necessarily theological, to understand the persistence of conscious and systematic goodness, despite the wreck of dogma and

¹ See HYDE, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 75.

² The keen vision of the anti-social Nietzsche recognizes this. "The idealist, precisely like the priest," sees "the 'understanding,' the 'senses,' 'honors,' 'good-living,' and 'science' under him, as injurious and seductive forces, over which 'spirit' soars in pure being-by-itself."—*The Case against Wagner*, p. 244.

the crash of creed. It is a mistake to suppose that our slowly won altruism is bound up with the church, historic Christianity, theism, or any set of propositions that came into being at a stated time and place. On the other hand, it is still more mistaken to imagine that the goodness we actually see has its roots within the modern man, that it springs from a rapidly improved and socialized human nature instead of from that vast transmitted culture in which we are bathed from earliest childhood and by which we are insensibly tinged. The family may dispense with religion and rely on pure natural affection, but society is very far from being able to dispense with a belief-basis for altruism. Dogma after dogma may be surrendered, but not the idealistic anthropology that utters itself at one time in the teachings of Jesus, the theology of St. Paul, or the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, and at another in the democracy of Rousseau or Mazzini, the philosophy of Schopenhauer, or the poetry of Walt Whitman.

All-human, then, is the ultimate affirmation that is the corner stone of social religion. Not the doctrine about the gods but the doctrine about men is the thing to be conserved. Higher criticism, or comparative mythology, or Darwinism may endanger concrete forms of religious belief, but religion has a power to enter new forms. The only persistent foe of religious anthropology is the positive or scientific way of regarding men.

The cool observation of science discloses no bonds between men other than those adjustments of feeling due to natural selection and that mutuality of interest arising in the organization of actual society. The likeness of men is to be attributed to a common descent. Whatever unity there is lies behind, not before them. Men are separate monads, and there is no limit to the degree to which the happiness or perfection of one man may surpass that of another. Fellows they are, but only so far as fellowship is felt. Beyond this their paths need not cross. If one takes up the burden of another's destiny, let him look for result in his own feelings, for other fact there is none. And the time comes when all the burden-bearing is as if it had not been.

"Therefore," so might the inference run, "look to thyself and to those that hold thy heart strings, but trouble not thyself about the rest!"

Such is the result when the study of man is pursued with the methods that have proved so successful in geology or zoölogy or philology. And the certitude seems no less in the one case than in the others. Probably as science finds man *so is he*.

But while expanding geology may clash with Genesis, or expanding zoölogy with the special-creation hypothesis, thus provoking a conflict with religion, which soon ceases, however, by religion surrendering needless dogmas, it is otherwise with anthropology. Between the individualistic interpretation and the social interpretation of man the opposition is complete. The one rests on fact, the other on faith. The one is positive, the other idealistic. The one weakens social control, the other strengthens it. Here is a conflict between science and religion which is real, and which we may be very sure will last for a long time to come. So long as so much precious and indispensable social emotion is bound up with certain convictions as to what we are and what we may become to each other, society will find means to renew their vitality. The profound truth which sociologists are just bringing to light that, whatever be the ultimate ground of association, society at a given moment is held together by beliefs rather than by interests,¹ opposes the confident optimism of men of science, and justifies in a measure the contention of those who have insisted on the indispensableness of religion to society.²

¹"General beliefs are the indispensable pillars of civilizations; they determine the trend of ideas, they alone are capable of inspiring faith and creating a sense of duty."—LE BON, *The Crowd*, p. 150.

"It is not by reason, but most often in spite of it, that are created those sentiments that are the main springs of all civilizations—sentiments such as honor, self-sacrifice, religious faith, patriotism, and love of glory."—*Ibid.*, p. 116.

"Every civilization is as it were a dream of a thousand years, in which heaven and earth, nature and history, appear to men illumined by fantastic light and representing a drama which is nothing but a projection of the soul itself, influenced by some intoxication—I was going to say hallucination—or other."—AMIEL, *Journal Intime*, Dec. 8, 1869.

²Of "naturalism," which takes what I call a *positive* view of man's nature, life,

But while the affirmation of brotherhood will persist, and with it a religious philosophy to support it, we cannot ignore the steady growth of the scientific temper. From every field of investigation theology, with its supernatural causes, seems likely to be driven. The geologist finds no "flood," the biologist admits no special creation, the anthropologist ignores the "fall," the archæologist discovers no Eden, the meteorologist records no prayer-won weather, the psychologist will not hear of witchcraft, the alienist ridicules "possession," the physician puts no faith in miraculous healing, the philologist needs no Babel, the historian discerns no divine guidance or special providence in national affairs, the sociologist will not avail himself of "divinely implanted conscience" or "conversion" in order to account for righteousness. Every investigator, whatever his faith, recognizes no supernatural intrusions in his own field, and, however perplexing the unexplained phenomena that still confront him, he is confident that some day he will be able to explain them by natural causes. However much he grants to the supernatural elsewhere, he stubbornly resists every attempt to graft it upon his own particular science.

This unanimity is significant. Man's thirst for truth and order is such that he will not rest content till the vast web of cause and effect spread out in space and time be faithfully reflected in human consciousness. Unsightly breaks or balks in the fabric of knowledge, due to the intrusion of the pseudo-explanations of theology or metaphysics, will not always be tolerated. Less and less will certain stretches of phenomena be suffered to remain in the stone age of explanation; and social religion, if and destiny, Mr. Balfour says: "If it is to be in harmony with principles like these that the child is to be taught at the mother's knee and the young man is to build up the ideals of his life, then, unless I greatly mistake, it will be found that the inner discord which exists, and which must gradually declare itself, between the emotions proper to naturalism and those which have actually grown up under the shadow of traditional convictions will at no distant date most unpleasantly translate itself into practice."—*The Foundations of Belief*, p. 86.

This able book argues that "naturalism" is unfavorable to morality, therefore *untrue*. What is shown is that it is unsuitable for purposes of social control, therefore at present *unsafe*.

it endures, will come to rest not on a special cosmogony, but rather on a transcendental interpretation of the course of things.

Such a shifting, if it comes, will close the warfare between religious philosophy and science. It is one thing to blur with legends and providential interferences the faithful picture of reality science is trying to achieve. It is quite another thing to let fall upon this picture the rose or violet light of religious idealism. The latter may call up an emotion-tone unknown to the white light of science, but it does not confuse proportions and relations.

In some such fashion may religion persist without getting in the way of truth. As its postulates become fewer in number and less concrete, they will cease to offer rivalry to the scientific account of the universe, and will become merely elements of a humanitarian faith. If the attenuation of belief proceeds still farther, control by religion passes over into control by ideals, which forms the subject of the next chapter.

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